

Little Moments Like These

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Category: Gummi Bears

Genre: Family, Hurt-Comfort

Language: English

Characters: Buddi B., Gritti B., Grubbi B., Ursa B.

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2016-04-12 13:28:58

Updated: 2016-04-14 10:30:26

Packaged: 2016-04-27 19:17:26

Rating: T

Chapters: 2

Words: 3,047

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: A series of one shots about the Barbics and their way of life, before and after they came to Ursalia. Chapter 2: In which poor Buddi can't catch a freakin' break!

1. The Pain Within

****LITTLE MOMENTS LIKE THESE ****

CHAPTER 1: THE PAIN WITHIN

CHAPTER SUMMERY: Ursa's been distant lately at the very moment that Buddi needs her most. Will she realize that time alone could not heal these wounds? _

TIMEFRAME: A month or so after 'Return to Ursalia' but takes place before 'The Rite Stuff'. _

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Buddi sighed as he wandered the halls aimlessly. Ursa had warned him to stay close to the small section of the city they had quartered in but with the way she's been acting he doubted she would notice that he was gone for a few minutes.

It had been a whole month since the Woods fell, and Buddi wished he had someone to talk tooâ€|sure, Sunni had been great the one or two times the Glens had visited but they kept themselves scarce.

"Gruffi said it's to give you guys some space," Sunni said once when they grasped a moment or two out of the little time they saw each other for themselves, "He doesn't think we should intrude."

"It's probably for the best," Buddi replied, thankful that the Glen patriarch knows what going too far was, "It would be hard for you to understand, and Ursa's always been a private personâ€|"

Ursa.

She'd changed after the Woods fell. Buddi supposed that was partly the weight of leadership that she had to take up so suddenly after Averi, his father, died during the last night, and partly because of the grief that night had caused her. She's more hardened now, and all the time she had spent with him before suddenly evaporated into nothingness. She barely even spoke the week it took to get here.

"I wish those stupid humans just stayed away!"

Normally, the youngest Barbic was not so quick to judge others but he was now starting to truly see why his parents was so worried in their last days back home. Dad's gone now, and his Mama had to watch it happen. Ursa's anger and grief had driven her away from him and Buddi wished that he could do something.

Not only that, he missed Averi! Between his parents, he took more after his father than his mother. They shared a love for music and would often play together. Ursa scowled but he knew she didn't really mind, although she couldn't really understand it either. Now, that was goneâ€|.

Finding himself back in front of his room, the young Barbic stormed in and slammed the door behind him, not really caring if Ursa came to lecture him about his lack of control at the moment. Heck, he'd take that over the cold and distant person she's been the last month or so. Throwing himself on the bed he desperately tried to hold back sobs.

"Ursa, I think you should go check on Buddi right now," Gritty said firmly, having had cornered her at last.

The Barbic leader blinked, "Gritty, Buddi's never been overly independent on me orâ€|you know. He can handle himself."

"Are you even listening to yourself right now?" Gritty shook his head in disbelief, "Ursa, _he's just a kid._ Do you really think you're on your own through all this?"

"Of course I don't," Ursa began, but was cut off.

"No, you _DO _think so," Gritty's tone raised an octave, "Listen, I know what you've been going through this past month. Averi was my friend â€" as nearly as close to me as you are. Barbic Woods was my home too. And I know you're not used to leading on your own," He placed a firm hand on Ursa's shoulder, "but I need you to listen to me _right now. _If you keep on going on the way you are right now, then that cub ain't gonna make it as sure as the suns gonna raise tomorrow. If you won't be there for him now, then no one is."

Ursa shook her shoulder free, growling, but her best friend wasn't finished with her yet.

"Go. Go and confirm it to yourself if you're so certain."

And with that he was gone, leaving his leader in stunned silence.

Buddi didn't know how long he laid there fight back tears. He eventually lost that battle and cried softly, wishing for someone to take the pain, uncertainty and the not knowing how to express it all away. He was so preoccupied in his own emotions that he didn't hear his door creak open.

Ursa's heart sank like a stone when her only child's cries reached her ears. She thought she came to her senses after she got him back from Igthorn, but now it was like a second awakening. Her baby was hurting, and confused, and he probably didn't even know how to approach her with the way she's been acting lately. For a moment, she stood there, frozen, not knowing what to do. And then, on instinct, she crossed the floor and lay down next to Buddi, pulling him close like she used to do when he was three or four, perhaps.

Buddi's vision was too blurred to see her, but he recognized her scent. He huddled closer to his mother, closer to her safety and warmth " and cried more when remembering that Daddy can't join them now" |

A sudden lump appeared in Ursa's throat as she ran her fingers through her son's hair " so much like his father's " and for the first time since she called retreat, accepted that she couldn't do more; she did not fight it and let the tears come. She finally lost her battle with the storm within. As much as she didn't want Buddi to see her this way, she realized now that he _needed _to see it. He needed to know he wasn't alone.

Ursa was sorry that she lost sight of what was truly important to her now. Buddi was all the blood family she had left now, and it scared her that she nearly lost him through her own actions" |.again " |. But unlike when they rescued him from Igthorn, this wasn't a physical enemy they could fight.

Eventually, mother and son would drift off into a restless sleep aided by a broken heart. Morning would come, and they would spend the day sorting out their emotions, and they would eventually learn to bear this pain. But for now, they were united in their grief as one.

**A/N: Well I just nearly made myself cry writing this" |the next chapter won't be so" |angsty. I promise.**

2. A Day In Barbic Woods

**LITTLE MOMENTS LIKE THESE **

CHAPTER 1: A DAY IN BARBIC WOODS

CHAPTER SUMMERY: The first of a two-parter chapter. This is my rough idea on how an average day looked like during Buddi's early cubhood. And in which poor Buddi can't catch a break.

_TIMEFRAME: Buddi is five years old, almost six, and hasn't begun his training yet. Ursa is in her mid-twenties. _

WARNINGS: My pre-Ursalia Ursa is quite a bit softer than the post-Barbic Woods one. The reason for this is because she has yet to shoulder the burden of being the clan's sole leader " a title she shares with her mate Averì, who dies when the Woods fall. Check out Drums of War for a bit more detail on why Ursa hardened the way she did.

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05:30 AM

Ursa and Averì's room

Ursa opened her eyes and scanned the darkened bedroom with her eyes. Averì always got up a half hour before she did. The air was still noticeably chilly as a result of the light rain they had yesterday.

Getting out of bed the Barbic got dressed. The sun wasn't up yet, but Buddi would soon be. After a while Ursa got used to adjusting herself to her son's schedule. She left the hut determined to enjoy the fresh air and properly wake up before having to deal with an energetic five year old.

_05:51 AM _

Buddi's room

Buddi woke up early today. He knew this because he just heard Ursa come back from her morning walk, and she usually got him up at six. He only recently dropped calling her "Mama" publicly, just as he stopped calling Averì "Daddy" about three months back. Most other Gummi clans would've probably called this unnecessary and unnatural but for a Barbic this was a completely natural and expected part of growing up.

It wasn't long until he heard the door creek open and heard Ursa's light footsteps creek the floorboard ever so slightly. As she was female, and lighter, she was near silent and shift as she moved but he knew how to listen for it.

Turning on the lamp on her cub's bedside table, Ursa was pleasantly surprised to find him awake and that she didn't have to drag him outta bed this time. Sure, he was as hyper as children go but that was after she managed to get him up. "You're up early."

"Couldn't sleep," Buddi responded as he sat up, smiling up at him mother.

Ursa chuckled at this simple reply. "Well then, you can get dressed now. Grubbi should have breakfast ready soon."

Nodding, the boy jumped out of bed and grabbed the clothes she set out on his bedside chair and ran into the bathroom as his mother set out to make his bed, the sheets and blanket twisted. He most likely

kicked them off during the night as well. It was one of the things she had in common with him as a cub. It was only after years of training that Ursa learned to sleep lightly and hold her guard up at all times.

Finishing with the task, she turned when Buddi returned fully dressed. "Ready."

He nodded excitedly, eager to start the day.

_06:09 AM _

Ursa and Buddi were on their way to the dining hall. Buddi was chattering none stop and Ursa could help but shook her head in amusement at his antics. They were nearly halfway there when a sudden cry and Buddi's wind was nearly tackled outta him.

"'Uddi!"

"Oof! Get off, Adi!"

Ursa laughed at her five year old's attempt lightly pushing the three year old Adalia off of him, who won't budge a bit. The girl was of a light brown shade with hair slightly darker. She had a green hair ribbon that tied it back. Her tunic dress was similar to Ursa's, except it was light green and had a strip that went over the bare shoulder. She wore no shoes. Light eyes spark up at Buddi, and she demanded, "Play!"

"Adi, it's not even breakfast yet!" Ursa shook her head at the little girl in wonder, "You and Buddi can play after you eat."

"Nuh uh," the three year old shook her head determinately. "We play now."

Buddi shot his parent a terrified look that screamed 'please-don't-let-her-force-me-to-play-dress-up-AGAIN' look.

Before Ursa could say anything, another voice drifted to them, belonging to Adi's father, Eluzai, "Adalia Barbic! What were you thinking running from your mother like that?" The mud brown Barbic was padding up to them with Averi, his eyes sparkling in amusement at seeing his son at the little girl's mercy.

"But _daddy!" _

"No buts," Eluzai said, "you can play later."

"'Kay," Adi give up. Her mommy Fianna was normally the softer parent in her case. If she protested now it might end up being bad for her.

Buddi sighed in relieve as soon as she's gone. "Can't I just ditch her today?" He asked in dismay, "She kinda made me promise to play tea party yesterday â€" _and I don't wanna! _She's a NIGHTMARE!"

Ursa and Averi shot each other a look as they began to walk again, before Ursa said, "Buddi, you promised. It's not right to break a promise, even if it was forced out of you."

"Gee, thanks for your help, Mom," Buddi muttered.

"Think of it as pulling off a Band-Aid," Averi suggested, "Just get it over with."

Ursa promptly smacked her husband over the head for that comment.

"I was only trying to _help, _woman!"

"Then _stop _trying to help."

"You two just find my torture amusing, don't you?" Buddi rolled his eyes as they reached their destination.

A moment of silence, and then Ursa and Averi replied as one, "Yes."

"Swell."

_06:40 AM _

The moment Buddi was excused from the table; he snuck off to attempt to hide from his personal terror. He didn't understand why the adults were so amused by it. However, he was short on luck today and ran straight into Gritty who had been making sure everything was secure before going to breakfast. He chuckled at the cub's expression, "You look like a cornered rabbit, Buddi."

"Don't tell Adi which way I went, please," Buddi begged, not caring how it sounded at the moment.

"Ah," Gritty understood right away, "what does she want this time?"

"She drafted me into a tea party."

"Then you best make tracks while you still can," Gritty winced, "I remember when Ursa hit her girly phase. It wasn't pretty."

"_Ursa? _As in won't even wear a dress Ursa?" Buddi gaped. "I mean, I woulda believed Fianna, but _Ursa?" _

"She wasn't always the private and secluded warrior she is now, Buddi," Gritty nodded, "You won't believe what she put me throughâ€|she and Fianna both. Certainly sucks when your best friend's a girl."

"'Uddi!" Adi's small voice was heard from somewhere behind Buddi, and he froze.

"As nice is this chat is, I got run!" and with that, the boy darted in the other direction, "bye!"

_08:30 AM _

Turns out that Buddi managed to avoid Adi for a little more than an hour and a half, but her mother was a natural tracker, and some of that talent she passed onto her daughter, much to Buddi's dismay. He was now being partially dragged to Adi's room as she went on and on

about something or another. Resistance was futile at this point.

Several of the men gave the poor cub a pitying look as they passed, most of them were around when Ursa and Fianna were cubs and they certainly saw or experienced what the unlucky victims went through.

_10:23 AM _

Buddi had just about lost it by now! Nearly two and a half hours of playing tea party, dolls, dress up and whatever other torturous experience that devious little demon came up with he was about to go insane. Luckily he was saved by Fianna who insisted that Adi took a nap, hence freeing her captiveâ€¦I mean, play mate.

"You okay, kiddo?" Averi asked ask he passed him and a few of the others discussing something that Buddi's five year old mind really didn't care less about at the moment.

"I survived," Buddi sighed. "If Ursa looks for me, tell I went to lie down. That kid is exhausting." And he promptly headed to his room, leaving his father to watch him go with a half pitying look.

_14:54 PM _

Buddi was granted up to lunch to do what he pleased. After that he was forced to take Adi to play outside. And it was still muddy outside from the rain last night. Which lead to his current predicament: getting Adi and himself in clean, dry clothes _before _Ursa, Fianna or Grubbi spots them.

"You just have to start a mud fight, didn't you?" Buddi grumbled to the three year old as they hid in a shadowed corridor as he watched for a clear coast, "Ursa and Fianna will have our hides! And if were somehow still alive Grubbi'll finish the job. Tria HATES me today." Which was a lot to say since the Barbic Age of Trails was an emotionless being. "C'mon, let's go."

Spoken a moment too soon. Ursa just came around a corner.

"BUDDI TIMBA BARBIC, WHAT IN GUM'S NAME ARE YOU TWO DOING?!"

"â€¦Oh, come ON!"

_18:30 _

Buddi winced as his skin still ached from Ursa's scrubbing him clean from the mud. Today was not a fun day. After a rather painful bath during which Ursa lectured none stop he was handed over to Grubbi who repeated the sentiments and he was promptly placed on kitchen duty the following day for about two of his hours. He _hated _doing dishes! And after that Ursa ordered him to bed directly _after _dinner. Adi got off easy; she was grounded for a week. But Buddi supposed that he was lucky Ursa didn't bring out the belt.

Ursa entered her son's room to wish him good night, talking her usual place on the edge of his bed. "What a dayâ€¦"

"No kidding," Buddi sighed, "did ya have to scrub that hard?"

"Don't test me," Ursa warned, "how many times have Grubbi or myself told you not to play in the mud. Just stay in the treetops. Is that too much to ask?"

"No, I guess not," Buddi sighed, "I'm sorry, Mama."

Ursa smiled, "I know you are little one. Just take your punishment well and then all is forgiven. Today just wasn't your day wasn't it?"

"You can say _that _again," Buddi groaned.

A chuckle, "Get some rest, Buddi. Maybe tomorrow things will get better."

Buddi did as she asked. Ursa stayed with him until his breathing evened out. Leaving her son's room's door open just a crack when she turned to leave and having turned out his lamp, Ursa groaned and rubbed her temples.

"That boy's gonna be the death of me."

**A/N: And that's a wrap *drops down exhausted* poor Buddi. Hopefully he'll catch a break in my next chapter. Golly, this monstrosity is twice the length of what I normally write. And don't worry; Adi will mellow outâ€|eventuallyâ€| **

End
file.